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COM Port Woes
by Robert Ashby

I have had a few of you e-mail me after reading my COM Port Programming article. The article outlined a way to use the ActiveX capabilities of Internet Explorer to communicate over a COM port. There were some neat advantages to using Internet Explorer to communicate this way. First of all, you could build a page to communicate using Notepad or any other text editor. Second, you can add graphics, text boxes, and various programming interfaces without having to deal with any messy Windows programming or buying expensive development packages. You don't have to worry about installation programs since all you need is a Web page.

However, you do need to make sure that **mscomm32.ocx** is properly registered on your computer. This was causing headaches for some of you. Adam Wodz was kind enough to send me the solution to the dilemma that I had heard about from several of you about woes with the **mscomm32.ocx** not working properly. He noted that you had to add something to the registry. Since the computers that I've been working on have Visual Studio installed or have had programs that I've written in Visual Basic that also use the COM port object, that took care of this entry for me.

You first need to register the ActiveX control normally using **regsrv32.exe**. This takes care of most of the problem. You then, however, need to add an entry to your registry. I have included the file that Adam sent me for you to download. The file contains the following text.

```
REGEDIT4

[HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Licenses\4250E830-6AC2-11cf-8ADB-
00AA00C00905] @ =
"kjljvjjjoquqmjjjvpqqkqmqykypoqjquoun"
```

That was just intuitively obvious, wasn't it? First and foremost! Remember that it's a good idea to back up your registry before trying this!! Please don't complain to ChipCenter or Adam if this doesn't work. However, I would like to hear if you are still having problems.

Adam also raised a question of how to send an array of values to the COM port. He sent some sample code similar to the following.

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```
MyArray=new Array("H","E","L","L","O");

If(MSCOMM1.PortOpen==true){
    For(n=0;n<5;n++)
        MSComm1.Output=MyArray[n];
}
```

If you want to substitute numbers in place of the characters, make sure you key in the escape before the hex number, e.g., "\xFF", "\x2C", etc.

Send me some feedback if you are still having problems in this area. We'll try to figure out what problem you are having together and post the results for all to learn from.

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